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ABSTRACT

Religiosity is a personality attribute that affects social attitudes and behavior. To examine whether religiosity also affects television use, a study administered questionnaires to 346 Christian conservatives, moderates, and liberals in six different churches in northeast Ohio during November and December 1987. The questionnaire measured religiosity, watching programs containing sex and violence, viewing motivations, and television attitudes. Findings showed that compared to nonconservatives, religious conservatives were less motivated to watch television because of the sexual appeal of characters and programs, watched fewer programs containing sexual content, found television to be less realistic, and felt television was less important to them. Findings also showed no religious group differences for reactionary motivation or watching violent programs. (Three tables of data are included, and 35 references are attached.) (Author/MS)

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THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOSITY ON TELEVISION USE

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Abstract

Religiosity is a personality attribute that affects social attitudes and behavior. We considered whether religiosity also affects television use. We expected religious conservatives and nonconservatives to differ in their motivations for watching television, viewing of programs with sexual and violent content, and attitudes about the medium. In a pretest we assessed the validity of a religious beliefs scale for placing respondents into known religious groups. We then administered questionnaires to 346 Christian conservatives, moderates, and liberals in six churches. Respondents ranged in age from 17 to 82 years. Analyses of covariance, with age, gender, and education covariates, suggested that, as compared to nonconservatives, religious conservatives were less motivated to watch television because of the sexual appeal of characters and programs, watched fewer programs containing sexual content, found television to be less realistic, and felt television was less important to them. Contrary to expectations, we found no religious group differences for reactionary motivation or watching violent programs. We discussed these findings.

The Impact of Religiosity on Television Use

Conservative religious leaders have argued that viewing television programs containing sex and violence undermines the moral fiber of society. Interest groups such as the Christian Leaders for Responsible Television (CLEAR-TV), for example, have sought to reduce televised sex and violence (McManus, 1987). In light of such criticism, it is reasonable to ask how devout people use television and whether they avoid watching programs with sexual and violent content. The issue that we addressed was whether religiosity affects television use.

Religiosity reflects piousness or strict, devoted, and traditional religious observance. It is manifested in beliefs and practices. Religiosity affects behavior. For example, researchers have found that religious practice discourages alcohol and drug use among adolescents (Hadaway, Elifson, & Peterson, 1984), and lowers the incidence of suicide among church members (Stark, Doyle, & Rushing, 1983). Because religion is pervasive in the lives of fundamentalists (Tamney & Johnson, 1985), we expected religiosity to influence media behavior.

Some research suggests that religious fundamentalists or conservatives use television in a manner similar to the larger population. Roberts (1983) found no appreciable differences between moral majority members, a group that consists mostly of evangelicals or fundamentalists, and the general population in the amount of sex and violence viewed. In contrast, Atkin (1985) found that sexual conservatives were highly selective and chose television programs in accord with their predispositions.

Media Sex and Violence

One overriding question is whether watching televised sex or violence is harmful to the viewer. Although the opinion is not universally shared, the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography (1986) concluded that exposure to sexually violent materials leads to a probable increase in aggression, and that there is "a causal relationship between exposure to materials of this type and aggressive behavior toward women" (p. 39). The Commission argued that, "A significant amount of material appears on network television that qualifies as the type of sexual violence that the Commission has found to be the most harmful form of pornography" (p. 362).

Such conclusions heighten the concern of religious conservatives about the effects of televised sex and violence. Some other writings support this fear. Zillmann (1986) summarized effects of prolonged exposure to pornography found in experiments: greater approval of premarital and extramarital sexual activity, doubt about the value of marriage as an institution, and a greater tendency to commit rape. Although Donnerstein and Linz (1986) agreed with Zillmann's assessment of the research about violent pornography, they disagreed with the notion that nonviolent pornography has been proved harmful. They contended that the combination of sex and violence is worrisome.

Although experiments support a conclusion that exposure to television violence may cause short-term priming and modeling effects, it is not clear whether such effects extend beyond the laboratory. Rubenstein (1982) argued that "the convergence of most of the findings about televised violence and later aggressive behavior by the viewer supports the positive conclusion of a causal relationship" (p. 104). The evidence, though, is mixed. After a 3-year panel study of children and adolescents, Milavsky, Kessler, Stipp, and Rubens (1982) found no significant association between exposure to televised violence and later aggressive behavior. They concluded that short-term modeling effects found in experiments "do not lead to stable patterns of aggression" (p. 155).

Media Uses and Effects

Some studies about sex, violence, and television exposure show effects in laboratory situations where individual choice is limited. Such restrictions contrast with a uses and gratifications view highlighting "the role of sociological and psychological factors in mitigating mechanistic media effects" (Rubin, 1986, p. 281). According to this perspective, viewers are more active in media selection and use (Rubin & Perse, 1987).

Contrasted with ritualistic use of television out of habit and to fill time, audience activity points to instrumental or goal-directed television use (Rubin, 1983, 1984). Abelman (1987, 1988, 1989) found similar motives among viewers of religious television programs. Such motives have been linked to knowledge and media behavior including news and information program viewing (Rubin, 1983, 1984). Researchers have found links between information-seeking motives and increased knowledge about candidates and issues in political campaigns (Atkin & Heald, 1976; Garramone, 1983; McLeod & Becker, 1974).

The goal of uses and gratifications research is to explain media effects (Rubin, 1986). To do so, investigators need to consider how social and psychological elements affect media use and behavior. We expected religiosity, as an important personality variable, to influence motives for watching television, attitudes about the medium, and types of programs watched, especially the choice of programs containing sex and violence.

Hypotheses

We defined "religiosity" in this study as orthodoxy of Christian beliefs and frequency of religious practice. Religious conservatives practice their religion frequently and are orthodox in their Christian beliefs. We expected that religious conservatives and nonconservatives would use television differently. Our underlying research question was: Are there differences between religious conservatives and nonconservatives in (a) motivations to watch television, (b) viewing programs containing sexual and violent content, and (c) attitudes about television?

Besides ritualized and instrumental orientations, past research also has located a reactionary use of television among religious viewers. Abelman (1987, 1988) noted that some viewers of religious television

largely avoid regular television programming and watch mostly religious channels instead. They watch religious television to avoid sexual and violent content in standard broadcast programming, and to seek spiritual guidance. We would expect such an orientation to be most prevalent among those who are most devout. We, therefore, anticipated that:

H1: Religious conservatives will have stronger reactionary television viewing motivations than nonconservatives.

Given the pervasiveness of religion in the lives of fundamentalists (Tamney & Johnson, 1985), religious conservatives tend to be sexual conservatives. Because sexual conservatism is manifested in media behavior (Atkin, 1985), the sexual appeal of television characters and programming should be unattractive to religious conservatives. Therefore, we hypothesized that:

H2: Conservatives will have weaker voyeuristic television viewing motives than nonconservatives.

H3: Conservatives will view sexually oriented television programs less often than nonconservatives.

Religiosity also appears to reduce certain violent behaviors, such as suicide and rape (Stack & Kanavy, 1983; Stark et al., 1983). Expecting social behavior to extend to media behavior, we anticipated that:

H4: Conservatives will view violent television programs less often than nonconservatives.

Religious conservative leaders have warned that sex and violence are major themes on television (Falwell, 1980). If conservatives listen to their religious leaders who criticize television entertainment, they would discount the role of television in their own lives and the realism of television content. As Abelman (1987) noted, reactionary viewing correlates with reduced television affinity. We expected, therefore, that:

H5: Conservatives will have less affinity with television than nonconservatives.

H6: Conservatives will perceive television as being less realistic than nonconservatives.

Method

We administered questionnaires to Christian conservatives, moderates, and liberals in six different churches in northeast Ohio during November and early December 1987. We constructed the instrument to measure religiosity, watching programs containing sex and violence, viewing motivations, and television attitudes. The last items in the questionnaire were age, gender, and education indicators to be used as control variables. These demographics affect attentiveness to religious radio and television programming and could influence how religious people choose secular programming (e.g., Buddenbaum, 1981; Johnstone, 1971-1972).

The ages of the 346 respondents in the sample ranged from 17 to 82 years (M = 42.86, SD = 13.66). The sample was 55.1% female. This was an educated sample with 13.8% having completed high school, 22.9% some college, and 63.1% graduated college.

Religiosity

We defined "religious conservative" as a fundamentalist or evangelical who practices biblical Christianity. Church affiliation served as the indicator of religiosity, or the degree of Christian conservatism and orthodoxy: conservative (3), moderate (2), or liberal (1). We assessed the validity and reliability of this measure of religiosity in a pretest.

Pretest. We first measured religiosity with a doctrinal orthodoxy scale developed by Glock and Stark (1966) and adapted by Batson and Ventis (1982). We asked respondents to state their level of agreement ("strongly agree" = 5, "strongly disagree" = 1) with 16 statements of Christian doctrine. We also asked three 5-point multiple-choice questions about religious behaviors. This 19-item doctrinal orthodoxy scale was cumbersome and the content of some items questionable.

We wanted to determine if we could use a 3-item religious beliefs scale to validate the placement of respondents into the three known religious groups: liberal, moderate, and conservative. We asked the respondents to rate themselves on three 7-point bipolar scales: "extremely conservative" (7) to "extremely liberal" (1), "extremely fundamentalist" (7) to "not at all fundamentalist" (1), and "extremely evangelical" (7) to "not at all evangelical" (1). The 3-item religious beliefs scale was a less obtrusive measure than the doctrinal orthodoxy scale.

We conducted the pretest in early October 1987 with the following groups: 28 Baptists, a group known to be conservative in their beliefs; 31 Presbyterians, a group known to be more moderate in their beliefs; and 29 Unitarians, a group known to be liberal. We summed the responses to the 19-item doctrinal orthodoxy scale (M = 73.51, SD = 27.35, Cronbach alpha = .99) and to the 3-item religious beliefs scale (M = 12.69, SD = 6.95, Cronbach alpha = .95). Both were highly reliable measures.

The 3-item religious beliefs scale correlated strongly with the 19-item doctrinal orthodoxy scale it was designed to replace ($r = .92$, $p < .001$). A religious convictions question about how each person viewed himself or herself as a Christian conservative, moderate, or liberal also correlated highly with the 19-item doctrinal orthodoxy scale ($r = .82$, $p < .001$) and with the 3-item religious beliefs scale ($r = .89$, $p < .001$). The pretest, then, provided concurrent validity for the 3-item religious beliefs scale.

Actual study. Prior to the demographic items at the end of the questionnaire, we employed both the religious beliefs scale and a religious practices scale to assess the appropriateness of measuring religiosity based on the respondents' belonging to conservative, moderate, or liberal churches. We asked three questions about religious practices: how often

they attended church services ("every week" = 5, "never" = 1), used the bible ("regularly" = 5, "seldom, if ever" = 1), and prayed ("daily" = 4, "almost never" = 1). We summed responses to the 3-item scale.

Supporting the validity of the known-groups placement of respondents into liberal, moderate, and conservative religious groups, religious beliefs and religious practices differed across the three groups. Conservatives (M = 17.23), moderates (M = 10.41), and liberals (M = 5.29) differed significantly on the religious beliefs scale ($F[2, 327]$ = 471.71, $p < .001$). Conservatives (M = 13.32), moderates (M = 11.51), and liberals (M = 8.26) also differed significantly on the religious practices scale ($F[2, 336]$ = 256.79, $p < .001$). The religious practices scale had acceptable reliability (Cronbach alpha = .69). The religious beliefs scale was highly reliable (Cronbach alpha = .92).

Program Viewing

To assess the dependent variables, the questionnaire first asked how often respondents watched certain television programs ("almost always" = 5, "never" = 1). Included in the list were eight programs containing violence and eight programs with sexual content. We also inserted eight family-oriented programs, with little sex or violence, as a buffer.

Violent program index. We derived the list of violent programs from programs rated highest in violence by the National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV) (Staff, 1987a). The list is based on research done by NCTV in which television shows are monitored and violent acts are counted and weighted by their severity. The NCTV supports its coding with specific reliability figures.

Programs defined as high in violence had a high number of violent acts per hour. NCTV counts minor acts of violence such as pushing and shoving as less than "the standard punching." Serious violence such as murders and rapes are weighed more heavily. The violent-content programs included in the survey were the following action-adventure shows: Crime Story; The Equalizer; Hunter; MacGyver; Magnum, P.I.; Miami Vice; Sledge Hammer; and Spenser: For Hire.

Sexual program index. We obtained a list of programs high in sexual content from the National Federation for Decency (NFD) (Staff, 1987b). The NFD counts sexual references about intercourse and comments about sex both inside and out of marriage. The NFD also counts skin scenes shown. The sexual-content shows included in the survey were the following situation comedy and drama programs: Cheers, Dallas, Dynasty, Golden Girls, Knots Landing, L.A. Law, Moonlighting, and Night Court.

The NFD did not have reliability statistics, but its list of violent shows included the same ones that NCTV did, though ranked differently. This supported reliability of the program categorizations. Face validity also is apparent given the themes and content of the programs on the list.

We formed two indexes, one summing responses for the eight violent shows and another summing responses for the eight sexual shows. Cronbach

alpha reliabilities were .71 for the sexual program index (M = 14.26, SD = 5.19) and .74 for the violent program index (M = 12.03, SD = 4.08).

Viewing Motivations

We asked respondents about their viewing motivations: how much they agreed with 34 reasons for watching television ("strongly agree" = 5, "strongly disagree" = 1). We adapted Rubin's (1983) 27 viewing motive items to assess why they watched television, along with 3 voyeurism questions to assess how interested they were in sexual qualities of the programs (Bantz, 1982; Perse, 1986). Four other items asked about reactionary viewing motives (Abelman, 1987)--if viewers avoided programs containing sex and violence, and watched television for spiritual guidance and moral support.

We used principal components factor analysis to examine these responses. Because of the interrelated nature of motives for watching television (Rubin, 1986), oblique rotation was used. Seven factors, accounting for 64.3% of the total variance, were first identified. To be retained, a factor required a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 with at least two loadings of .50 or greater beyond any secondary loadings above .30. We excluded one factor from further analysis. Table 1 summarizes the primary factors. We summed responses to the acceptable items on each factor to create the viewing motive scales.

Factor 1 (Enjoyment) had an eigenvalue of 11.06 and accounted for 12.5% of the total variance after rotation. Three relaxation and three entertainment items loaded on the factor (M = 19.21, SD = 4.52, Cronbach alpha = .88). Factor 2 (Substitution) had an eigenvalue of 2.99 and accounted for 14.7% of the total variance. Two habit, all three pass time, and all three companionship items loaded on the factor (M = 19.22, SD = 6.85, Cronbach alpha = .91). Factor 3 (Spiritual Guidance) had an eigenvalue of 2.42 and accounted for 4.7% of the total variance. The two moral support and spiritual guidance reactionary statements loaded on the factor (M = 3.04, SD = 1.29, Cronbach alpha = .66). Factor 4 (Avoidance) had an eigenvalue of 1.71 and accounted for 5.9% of the total variance. The two program avoidance reactionary items loaded on the factor (M = 5.30, SD = 2.38, Cronbach alpha = .77). Factor 5 (Information) had an eigenvalue of 1.39 and accounted for 7.0% of the total variance. Three statements about learning from television and one social interaction item loaded on the factor (M = 9.47, SD = 3.12, Cronbach alpha = .76). Factor 6 (Voyeurism) had an eigenvalue of 1.24 and accounted for 8.8% of the total variance. The three sexual interest items loaded on the factor (M = 5.01, SD = 2.04, Cronbach alpha = .84).

Typical of communication motivations, Pearson correlation analysis showed relationships among several viewing factors. The strongest associations were between enjoyment and substitution ($r = .42$, $p < .001$) and between spiritual guidance and information ($r = .42$, $p < .001$). The weakest associations were between avoidance and both spiritual guidance ($r = .14$, $p < .05$) and voyeurism ($r = .14$, $p < .05$). All other motive intercorrelations ranged between .19 and .38.

Television Attitudes

We next measured attitudes by assessing how much affinity respondents had with television and how real they perceived television to be. These measures were taken from Rubin (1983). Sample affinity statements included: "I would rather watch television than do anything else" and "I would feel lost without television to watch." Sample realism statements included: "television presents things as they really are in life" and "television lets me see how other people live." Response options ranged from "strongly agree" (5) to "strongly disagree" (1) with each statement.

Reliability was adequate on the affinity items with a Cronbach alpha of .68. For realism, one item was deleted to increase the reliability. The Cronbach alpha was .70 for the four reality items. We summed responses to the five affinity items, and the four reality items, to form separate affinity and realism scales. The mean affinity score was 9.25 (SD = 3.06), and the mean realism score was 8.68 (SD = 2.64).

Statistical Analysis

Consistent with past research, we treated religiosity and television attitudes as unidimensional measures (Batson & Ventis 1982; Glock & Stark, 1966; Rubin, 1983). Following factor and reliability analyses to create the scales, the analysis followed several steps. First, we used one-way analysis of covariance, with age, gender, and education as covariates, to test the hypotheses. We computed the ANCOVAs between liberal, moderate, and conservative religious groups for the avoidance, spiritual guidance, and voyeurism motives, sexual and violent program viewing, and television affinity and perceived realism. Second, we computed partial correlations, controlling for age, gender, and education, between the religious beliefs scale and the viewing motives, programs, and attitudes to consider the linearity of the ANCOVA findings. Third, we extended these analyses to the other viewing motives not included in the hypotheses.

Results

Table 2 presents the mean scores for the three religious groups on the television variables. Table 3 summarizes the television viewing partial correlates of the religious beliefs scale.

Viewing Motives

Reactionary viewing. The first hypothesis predicted that religious conservatives will have stronger reactionary viewing motives than nonconservatives. Reactionary motivations included two factors: avoidance of sex and violence programs, and using television for moral support and spiritual guidance. The hypothesis was not supported for either factor.

Although the main effect was not significant for either avoidance or guidance, the ANCOVAs found age and gender differences. For avoidance, age was a significant covariate ($F[1, 295] = 9.40$, $p < .01$). Those who were older avoided sex and violence programs more than those who were younger.

For spiritual guidance, gender was a significant covariate ($F[1, 318] = 4.83$, $p < .03$). Males used television more for spiritual support and guidance than females.

Voyeuristic viewing. The second hypothesis predicted that conservatives will have weaker voyeuristic viewing motives than nonconservatives. The ANCOVA showed a significant main effect for voyeuristic motivation ($F[2, 318] = 6.17$, $p < .01$). Scheffè post-hoc tests, though, found no significant differences between the three groups. Gender ($F[1, 318] = 17.02$, $p < .001$) and age ($F[1, 318] = 7.88$, $p < .01$) were significant covariates. Males and younger persons had stronger voyeuristic motives than females and older respondents.

Partial correlations, controlling for gender, age, and education, between the religious beliefs scale and voyeurism showed a significant negative correlation between voyeurism and religious beliefs ($r = -.16$, $p < .01$). The second hypothesis, then, received some support.

Other viewing motives. We examined the other viewing motives for possible religious-group differences. For enjoyment, the ANCOVA produced a significant main effect ($F[2, 314] = 4.71$, $p < .01$), but the Scheffè test showed no significant differences between the religious groups. Age was a significant covariate ($F[1, 314] = 11.64$, $p < .001$). Younger persons watched television to relax and to be entertained more than older persons.

For substitution, the ANCOVA located no significant difference between religious groups ($F[2, 310] = 0.07$, $p = .93$). Age ($F[1, 310] = 6.94$, $p < .01$) and education ($F[1, 310] = 6.97$, $p < .01$) were significant covariates. Younger and less educated persons used television more to pass time, out of habit, and for companionship than did older and better educated people.

For information, the ANCOVA found a significant main effect for the religious groups ($F[2, 316] = 6.58$, $p < .01$). Scheffè post-hoc analysis suggested that the difference was between moderates, who used television more to seek information, and conservatives. Education was a significant covariate ($F[1, 316] = 8.44$, $p < .01$). The less educated were more likely to use television to seek information than the better educated.

Program Viewing

Sexually oriented programs. The third hypothesis, that conservatives would view fewer sexually oriented programs than nonconservatives, was supported. The ANCOVA produced a significant main effect for religious groups ($F[2, 315] = 11.63$, $p < .001$). Scheffè post-hoc analysis identified that conservatives viewed fewer shows containing sex than both liberals and moderates. Gender was a significant covariate ($F[1, 315] = 4.09$, $p < .01$). Females watched more sexually oriented programs than males.

A partial correlation between the religious beliefs scale and the sexually oriented programs scale further supported the hypothesis. There was a significant negative correlation between religious beliefs and sexually oriented program watching ($r = -.26$, $p < .001$).

Violent programs. The fourth hypothesis, predicting that conservatives would view fewer violent programs than nonconservatives, was not supported. Although the ANCOVA found a significant main effect for the religious groups ($F[2, 315] = 3.71$, $p < .05$), the Scheffè test identified a difference between liberals, who watched fewer violent programs, and moderates. No covariates were significant.

Television Attitudes

Affinity. The fifth hypothesis predicted that conservatives would have less affinity with television than nonconservatives. The ANCOVA found no significant differences between religious groups ($F[2, 320] = 2.24$, $p = .11$), although the mean scores were in the predicted direction. Age ($F[1, 320] = 6.83$, $p < .01$) and education ($F[1, 320] = 4.17$, $p < .05$) were significant covariates. Older and less educated respondents felt television was more important in their lives than younger and better educated respondents.

Partial correlation analysis, controlling for gender, age, and education, did show a significant, though small, negative correlation between responses to the religious beliefs scale and television affinity ($r = -.11$, $p < .05$). The hypothesis, then, received limited support.

Realism. The sixth hypothesis, predicting that conservatives would perceive television to be less realistic than nonconservatives, received support. The ANCOVA showed significant differences between religious groups for television realism ($F[2, 316] = 6.02$, $p < .01$). The Scheffè post-hoc test revealed that moderates found television to be more realistic than conservatives ($p < .05$). Age was a significant covariate ($F[1, 316] = 4.04$, $p < .05$). Older respondents felt television was more realistic than younger respondents.

Discussion

We presumed that religiosity affects most areas of life. Therefore, we expected the degree of religiosity to affect television use, particularly viewing sexually oriented and violent programs. We found partial support. Religiosity related negatively to voyeuristic viewing motivation, and religious conservatives watched fewer sexually oriented television programs than nonconservatives.

Uses and gratifications assumes an active viewer, who chooses viewing fare rather than just watching what is on at the time. Our findings show a selective pattern whereby religious conservatives choose to watch less sexually oriented programming. It may be that conservatives are interested in television content that they do not find morally offensive. In line with the arguments of conservative leaders, we may surmise that religious conservatives may fear that watching sexually oriented television programming could lower sexual standards, especially for young people.

Although this pattern was evident for sexually oriented programs, we did not find the expected differences for violent programs. Our results,

then, partially agree with Roberts (1983) who found no significant differences between moral majority members and the general population on a combined total of viewing sex and violence programs. Although our study didn't compare religious conservatives with the general population, we tried to remedy two perceived limitations in that earlier study. Roberts failed to differentiate between sexually oriented programs and violent programs. He also failed to use specific programs that had been found empirically to have high sex and violence content.

Our findings are more in line with Atkin (1985) who reported that sexual conservatives are selective in choosing programs according to their predispositions. We can apply his statement that "selective avoidance of discrepant content is less widespread" (p. 88) to our program viewing results here. Religious conservatives, at least in this sample, were more concerned about sex than violence on television. Perhaps, biblical interpretation by conservatives puts more emphasis on sexual purity than dangers of violence. Or, possibly violence on television is seen being used for righteous causes, whereas sex is seen as a violation of righteousness because most sexual activity depicted on television is outside of marriage (Staff, 1987b). Television may realistically portray sex as desirable and practiced without negative consequences outside of marriage, whereas the viewer does not perceive violence as realistically portrayed or less able to be practiced without harsh consequences.

Besides the differences in selective program viewing, there were differences in viewing motivations supporting the variability of media utility. Religiosity related negatively with information and voyeuristic viewing motivation. Moderates were more likely than conservatives to watch television for information and for the sexual appeal of characters and programming. Older women also had weaker voyeuristic viewing motives than younger men. And, age correlated negatively with both voyeuristic and reactionary avoidance motivations. The degree of religiosity is one possible reason for these differences demographic relationships.

We should add a caution about three limitation of the study. First, this was not a randomly selected sample. Although the findings about sexual program preferences may be even more robust were we to compare religious conservatives with nonpractitioners, we may have masked possible effects for violent program viewing. Second, because the data were self-reported in church settings, social desirability may have affected responses. This is especially true for such measures as voyeurism and sexually oriented and violent program watching. Third, reactionary motivation questions about watching television to avoid sex and violence may not have been clear to all respondents. Abelman (1987) had previously used these questions for religious television program viewing.

For example, religious conservatives and nonconservatives did not differ on their reactionary viewing motives. This may be explained by the context of the questions in the survey. The questionnaire did not mention religious television and respondents may have assumed that the spiritual guidance referred to the programs listed earlier in the questionnaire. This would have reduced the scores, with few resulting group differences.

Aside from motivation, there were attitudinal associations. Religious conservatives did not rely on television in their everyday lives. Television affinity was a negative correlate of religious beliefs. This may show a lack of reliance on television given perceived conflicts with the conservatives' moral values. Conservatives also perceived television to be less realistic than the religious moderates.

Television exposure is another aspect of dependence. Clearly, the conservatives did not watch large amounts of television. This was apparent for the entire sample. For example, national Nielsen ratings at the time of the study showed that Golden Girls (23.7 rating) and Growing Pains (22.5 rating) were the third and fifth ranked programs ("Lucky 11," 1987). These were not, though, popular shows for this sample who "rarely" viewed them. Only 16.5% of the total sample watched Growing Pains and only 16.8% watched Golden Girls "almost always" or "often."

Low viewership, then, was another limitation of the study. On the average, only 13.1% of the sample "almost always" or "often" watched the television programs listed in the questionnaire (M = 14.7), whereas the Nielsen ratings for the entire list of programs averaged 17.2 ("Lucky 11," 1987). One explanation for this is that religiosity decreases television viewing. Another is that higher education decreases viewing (A. C. Nielsen, 1988a, 1988b). We could have improved the sample by better representing lower income and education levels. By so doing, we may have included those who watched the programs more often.

Religiosity is an important feature of personality. To date, though, little research has been done about how religiosity affects television viewing. Our findings point to at least three directions for research. First, we need to verify the findings that religious conservatives avoid sexually oriented programming, but do not avoid violent programming. As mentioned before, we may observe larger differences between religious conservatives and nonconservatives with a general population sample, which would include secular respondents.

Second, we need to consider what relationships exist between watching religious television programming and watching typical broadcast and cable television fare. Do those who watch religious programs avoid sex and violence on television as Abelman's (1987) study implied? Or, as Gerbner and his colleagues (1984) found, are viewers of religious programs slightly more likely to watch secular programs, but still exhibit similar tastes as nonviewers of religious programming?

Third, we need to consider how other social and psychological elements interact with religiosity to affect media use. For example, how does locus of control interact with degree of religiosity in affecting the choice of media content? What role does perceived realism play in interpreting media content? And, how do social and interpersonal relationships affect choice and use of media and their content?

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Table 1

Factor Analysis of Viewing Motives: Primary Loadings

Viewing Motive Items (I watch television . . .)	Viewing Motive Factors					
	ENJOY	SUBST	GUIDE	AVOID	INFOR	VOYER
ENJOYMENT						
because it relaxes me	.83	-.03	.05	-.02	.00	-.10
because it entertains me	.77	-.07	-.18	-.09	.04	.04
because it allows me to unwind	.75	-.07	-.11	.12	.06	.03
because it is enjoyable	.73	.02	.00	-.08	.10	.06
because it's a pleasant rest	.72	-.03	.19	.11	-.09	.03
because it amuses me	.70	.02	.02	.07	.12	.06
SUBSTITUTION						
just because it's there	-.05	-.82	-.05	-.06	-.03	-.04
because it's a habit, just something to do	.02	-.79	-.13	-.01	.01	.07
when I have nothing better to do	.02	-.77	.00	.00	-.08	-.01
because it gives me something to do to occupy my time	.09	-.77	.04	.04	-.08	.12
because it passes the time away, particularly when I'm bored	-.02	-.75	.03	.13	-.09	.20
when there's no one else to talk to or be with	.06	-.70	.05	.09	.10	.03
so I won't have to be alone	.10	-.64	.26	-.05	.11	-.14
because it makes me feel less lonely	.05	-.58	.30	.03	.17	.02

Table 1 (Cont.)

Viewing Motive Items (I watch television . . .)	Viewing Motive Factors ENJOY	SUBST	GUIDE	AVOID	INFOR	VOYER
SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE						
for spiritual guidance	-.04	-.04	.83	-.04	.04	-.04
for moral support	-.01	-.04	.65	.07	.14	.24
AVOIDANCE						
to avoid programs that are heavy in violence	-.07	.08	-.08	.91	.06	-.03
to avoid shows with lots of sex	-.03	-.04	.06	.89	-.06	-.09
INFORMATION						
so I can learn how to do things which I haven't done before	-.06	-.02	.00	.00	.86	-.05
because it helps me learn things about myself and others	.06	.15	.03	-.02	.82	-.02
so I could learn about what could happen to me	.03	.04	.13	.14	.65	.11
so I can talk with other people about what's on	.02	-.13	.01	-.04	.53	.15
VOYEURISM						
because of the sex appeal of the programs	-.03	-.11	.14	-.06	-.07	.83
because some of the characters are sexually attractive	.02	.02	.02	-.07	.09	.83
because I find some of the programs sexually arousing	.01	.06	-.01	-.01	.05	.82

Table 2

Religious Group Means

Television Viewing	Religious Groups		
	Liberals M	Moderates M	Conservatives M
VIEWING MOTIVES			
Enjoyment	18.88	20.14	18.95
Substitution	18.09	19.18	19.56
Spiritual Guidance	2.79	3.14	3.10
Avoidance	5.22	5.00	5.51
Avoid Violence	2.95	2.55	2.70
Avoid Sex	2.27[a]	2.47	2.77[a]
Information	9.42	10.43[a]	9.09[a]
Voyeurism	5.17	5.28	4.87
VIEWING BEHAVIOR			
Sex Programs	15.38[a]	15.45[b]	13.10[ab]
Violent Programs	10.97[a]	12.89[a]	11.97
TV ATTITUDES			
Affinity	9.63	9.55	8.87
Realism	8.61	9.55[a]	8.32[a]

Note. Means sharing common superscripts differ significantly across each row.

Table 3

Summary of Television Partial Correlates of Religious Beliefs

	Enjoyment	Substitution	Guidance
Religious Beliefs	-.06	.02	.01

	Avoidance	Information	Voyeurism
Religious Beliefs	.04	-.15**	-.16**

	Sex Programs	Violent Programs	Affinity	Realism
Religious Beliefs	-.26***	.00	-.11*	-.07

Note. Partial correlations controlled for age, gender, and education.

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (one-tailed).